

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

The listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

### **LISTING OF CLAIMS**

Claim 1 (previously presented): A method, comprising:

using an apparatus for controlling the load on articular cartilage forming part of an articular joint connecting a first bone to a second bone of a human or animal joint to treat arthritic conditions affecting the joint, the apparatus comprising:

a first fixation assembly for attachment to the first bone;

a second fixation assembly for attachment to the second bone; and

a link assembly coupled to the first fixation assembly by a first pivot and coupled to the second fixation assembly by a second pivot and configured to permit varying separation of the first and second pivots during use in a manner enabling separation between first and second pivots to increase during angular displacement of the articular joint and span anatomy affected by arthritic conditions but lacking fractures, the first and second fixation assembly thereby each being angularly displaceable relative to the link assembly;

said apparatus provides reduction of pressure on at least a portion of the joint without substantially resisting an angular displacement associated with relatively full mobility of the first and second bones of the joint to thereby treat arthritic conditions affecting the joint;

attaching the first fixation assembly to the first bone; and

attaching the second fixation assembly to the second bone.

Claim 2 (previously presented): The method according to claim 1 in which the first fixation assembly includes at least one pin for engaging with the first bone.